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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting with President Vladimir Putin of the
Russian Federation (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
The Vice President
Colin Powell, Secretary of State
Donald Rumsfeld, Secretary of Defense
Andrew Card, Assistant to the President and
Chief of Staff
Condoleezza Rice, Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs
Alexander Versbow, U.S. Ambassador to the
Russian Federation
Daniel Fried, Special Assistant to the
President and Senior Director for European
and Eurasian Affairs, NSC (notetaker)
Peter Afanassenko, Interpreter

President Vladimir Putin
Igor Ivanov, Minister of Foreign Affairs
Sergey Ivanov, Minister of Defense
Sergey Prikhodko, Deputy Head of the
Presidential Administration, Head of the
Foreign Policy Directorate
Igor Neverov, Director, Department of North
America, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Yuri Ushakov, Russian Ambassador to the
United States
Sergey Kislyak, Deputy Minister of Foreign
Affairs
Aleksey Korzhuev, Interpreter

DATE, TIME: September 27, 2003, 9:00 - 10:50 a.m., EDT
AND PLACE: Laurel Cabin, Camp David

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The President: Well, we've got an 11:00 press availability, we have about an hour and 45 minutes for work. I suggest we cover Iraq, Iran, nonproliferation and other issues, and our bilateral relations. Let's start with them, before we go overseas. (C)

Your remarks last night were a perfect prelude for this. You defined a vision well, and we have developed a checklist that breaks out a series of areas of interest and tasks that we can use to achieve two goals: first to change the culture of cooperation, if that's the right word, and reduce suspicious by working together; and, as important, to achieve concrete results that benefit both our peoples. This checklist is a way for you and me to hold our governments to account. We can measure progress by concrete results. This is a very good start. I'm pleased with the work on this. (C)

On this list, there are two areas I'd like to point out. One is military-to-military cooperation. This is important to change old habits. The other is one I'm pleased to see on the agenda. In Tokyo, our ministers got together to negotiate a meat agreement, white and red, so to speak, or beef and chicken. (C)

Ambassador Vershbow: And pork. (C)

The President: And pork as well. This bilateral agreement, when implemented will help us head off pressure from farm state Senators and Congressmen. I call this to your attention because it represents good progress and I hope our governments will ratify this agreement and use it as an example of cooperation. There are a lot of other issues in the checklist, but this is a very good start. (C)

President Putin: First, I thank you for this invitation. The atmosphere is, well, very pleasant and the company is good. (C)

The President: Not everybody. (U)

President Putin: No comment. But this really is very good company, and it is good to talk frankly and informally, too. I want to stress that we highly evaluate the development of Russian-American relations. This is a common achievement. The quality of that relationship has been demonstrated and strengthened in the past years. I think that we should focus on some important issues, subjects on which we can take joint action. (C)

First on our list of priorities is the Treaty on Strategic Offensive Reductions. We should not forget this. We have a special responsibility, the United States and Russia. The atmosphere of the world depends a lot on our relations in this area. We remember how it was born, and we remember the discussion with the United States about your withdrawal from the ABM Treaty. We still think that there was no need for withdrawal, and all you are doing could have been done without that withdrawal, but that is history. It happened. We are now discussing cooperation on missile defense. We want to develop principles by which we must and shall be guided in this area. We must centralize our cooperation from our side. There is no way to decentralize this. (S)

The President: Good. (S)

President Putin: I want to confirm our readiness for such work according to this principle. We're ready for cooperation in very many areas. The Group on Strategic Dialogue deserves our support and we should give it real meaning to ensure nothing breaks in our agenda. (S)

The President: Right. (S)

President Putin: I believe that in principle it is important for strategic relations that we launch implementation of these ideas. I am satisfied that our experts have begun working on an agreement on defense technology cooperation, and this can help achieve tangible results. It is most important the Ministers of Defense and persons in the Ministries take a productive line here. (S)

The President: Is this happening? (S)

Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld: Yes. (S)

President Putin: Yes. Recently, discussion within the Group on Strategic Dialogue included a paper you presented on Principles of Cooperation in Eurasia. Essentially, this meant U.S. ideas for cooperation in the post-Soviet space, including all countries that formed part of one country, the USSR, and are now in the Commonwealth of Independent States. We are ready to pursue cooperation in all regions of the world. But I just ask you to keep in mind that these states were not just part of one country, but are all Russian speaking to some degree, and they include 25 million ethnic Russians. All people who live there have close family and many have close business associations with

Russia. In essence, we are providing a lot of non-budget assistance to these countries that amount to many hundreds of millions of dollars. They are taking advantage of our cheap energy resources. Due to this, we have no choice but to attach great significance to these countries. (S)

The President: This is understandable. (S)

President Putin: We understand that they are independent countries. We respect this. They have the right to make their own choices. We would rather have the United States present there than some other, unnamed large countries. But I ask you to consider the special circumstances of these countries. (S)

The President: Let me say that we have no intention of crowding anybody out. We are very sensitive to the history here, and these are your neighbors, your relatives, with a common language. Our intent is to promote stability in this region, at the request of the governments there, in partnership with you, and we have no interest in competing. We're interested in bringing stability to a region that could be a hotbed of terrorist activity is important. Anytime the United States is active in a country on your borders, it sends a signal. I fully understand that there might be doubts, and we must work to ease these, so that it's understood that our actions are mutually beneficial. I'm glad you brought that up. If we don't handle it properly, it could lead to tensions. You put it well, and thank you. (S)

President Putin: Thank you. Now, I want to say a couple of words about our cooperation on terrorism. We faced this before some others considered this a danger, or felt that terrorism would bypass them. And we have had a long, bloody experience. We have sincere feelings about what happened to the United States. What you have done in response has borne fruit, including in Afghanistan. We supported your consistent, tough policy, and it helped break the Taliban's power there. If it were not for this, we'd face dangers in Afghanistan; these affect us, too, of course. Now, Afghanistan has turned around. The level of our cooperation, trust, and confidence here has increased, too. (S)

But frankly, we still we believe that some U.S. views with respect to Chechnya are not correct. Regrettably, attempts have been made to take advantage of the Chechnya situation to influence the domestic political situation in Russia. I have no other explanation for the fact that U.S. officials in Qatar met

with people recognized as terrorists by the United Nations, and Yandarbiyev maintains ties with guerilla groups in Afghanistan. He is an enemy of Russia, and your officials met with him. (S)

Secretary of State Powell: There is no evidence that our people met with him. On the contrary, we're in the process of pressing the Qataris to render him back to Russia. If you have more concrete information about this, please send it to us. (S)

President Putin: According to our information, this meeting did take place. (S)

Secretary of State Powell: Let's exchange our information. (S)

President Putin: On the whole, the way the United States talks about Chechnya, and the way your media covers it, could be much better. We realize what's happening there. We are making great efforts and showing great patience in order to bring order to Chechnya, and to bring it back to being a peaceful part of Russia. We don't receive any help from the international community, and we do not ask for such help; we only ask that no one hampers us in our efforts. We have no intention of terrorizing ordinary people in Chechnya. One thing should be clear for everyone: those who fight against us in Chechnya are a branch of al-Qaida. We have explained and this has met with understanding on the part of some Islamic states but from our new partners we don't see such support. (S)

The President: You have no stronger friend in the struggle with terror than the United States. We will not compromise in this struggle. When you were attacked in Moscow, we were the first to express our support. Others were quiet, but not us. Words are important, but not as important as actions. When we received information that terrorists were moving into Chechnya from Georgia, the first thing we did was to toughen up efforts in the Pankisi Gorge and start intelligence sharing. I agree that we need to find terrorists before they kill your people and our people. If we don't stop them in the Pankisi or southern Russia, they'll come to the United States. We're allies in the war on terrorism. We spoke yesterday about Abu Atiya, and we have exchanged intelligence about his efforts to steal MANPADS to shoot down your planes. He was planning to place bombs near your summer residence, and he wanted to kill you. He wants to kill me, too, I suppose. We are sharing intelligence and we brought him in. We are cooperating. You will hear criticism about Chechnya, if it looks like the elections are not going to be free and fair. I praised you about the decision to have

Chechen elections in front of the press when we were in Russia. On one hand, we must fight terrorists, and on the other hand we must allow people to express their opinions at the polls and have more power to run their own lives. Your leadership for that vision is critical, and people are more likely to accept your vision if elections are free and fair. With terrorists, however, you have so stronger ally and friend. I'm the guy who said, "dead or alive," and I meant it. ~~(S)~~

President Putin: George, if we didn't see you as allies, we wouldn't be sitting here and talking about these things at all. ~~(S)~~

The President: If you want more intelligence cooperation on this issue, and at the border, we can do that. We should also cut off their money, like you said to the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia. ~~(S)~~

President Putin: About the elections in Chechnya, we'll discuss Iraq later, and you know my position: there shouldn't be a vacuum of power, though there should be greater transfer of power, and the trappings of power. We should be careful as we take these steps. ~~(S)~~

The President: That's our position, too. ~~(S)~~

President Putin: Our positions are very close. And Chechnya is the same thing; it isn't different. The question is only when, and to what extent, to share power. All the candidates in the Chechen election were acceptable to us. No one was unacceptable. Many were living in Moscow and had business interests there, so we know them well. None of the candidates was associated with the guerillas or the opposition. So, the question is which of them has enough character, enough strength, to keep the situation under control. We know what is happening there, and we will achieve a final settlement. We won't put our partners in an uncomfortable position because of our actions. But keep in mind that anything can happen there, like in Iraq: your troops shot a family in a car. It was an accident. We understand. These things happen. We didn't blame your government or stick our nose in your affairs. We understand the political aspects, and we won't make our partners uncomfortable there. ~~(S)~~

The President: One thing is very important to us: to send a consistent message to the world. Everybody is listening to us, to you and to me. It is very important that we speak about the

elections as free and fair elections. That's why we also speak of the importance of a free press. It is part of our value system. I'm not trying to poke you in the eye, but it's part of my credibility to speak consistently about these things. We must hold the ground on issues which we hold dear. So, you will hear consistently from us, and on a high plane, about values, including those values we want to see put into effect in Iraq. ~~(S)~~

About Afghanistan, thank you for what you said. It looks like Karzai is gaining strength and confidence. We do need help with Pakistan in chasing down the Taliban leadership. They have done very well about al-Qaida, for example with Khalid Sheikh Mohammad and operatives close to Osama bin-Laden. Pakistan didn't tell anybody; their intelligence didn't leak about this operation and we moved in together. This was top al-Qaida leadership. Now they must get equally tough on the Taliban on the southeast border. Karzai is worried about the south, not the north. The other issue there is drugs. People are making 1 dollar a day busting their behinds working. And they can make 5 dollars a day carrying poppies. And so they will carry poppies. Plus, a lot of people in Europe use heroin. Our strategy on drugs in Afghanistan is not very good; it's not working. We have to develop one that does. Thanks for your understanding on this. It is very important to the world that this works. There should not be a vacuum. ~~(S)~~

President Putin: I have one question about Afghanistan. We have a good military base in Tajikistan, with about 15,000 troops, including border troops. This would be a good background base for your forces in Afghanistan. We could help with air transport. We are also ready to share intelligence. Our partners are not enthusiastic about this, however. We don't insist, but we are ready for this cooperation. We have a proposal, and there are no hidden thoughts behind it. ~~(S)~~

The President: Thank you. I was just asking the Secretary of Defense about this and he says we're aware of the offer. This is a very kind gesture. ~~(S)~~

President Putin: There are advantages to using this base. Our people there have experience; they know the situation well; they have a network of agents locally. Their knowledge could be useful. ~~(S)~~

The President: The best intelligence for finding the killers is human intelligence. It was very good for a while to intercept

their phone calls, but they got wise to this. Now they use pigeons. (S)

President Putin: We should shoot the pigeons. For soup. (S)

The President: And eat them. "Messenger soup." (S)

President Putin: This is a good opportunity to talk about Iraq. It's important for us to understand what U.S. objectives are for the documents we are preparing at the U.N. Let me underscore what I shared with Colin at dinner. Whatever document passes in the U.N., the situation there will remain very complicated. I recall the beginning of my actions in Chechnya. I met personally with many Chechens, especially in the beginning. I have continued such meetings, but in the beginning these were very frequent. The point is that some of them told me that to defeat us, you must be as brutal as we are ourselves. I believe this will be true in Iraq as well: the problem in Iraq is that your soldiers will not be as brutal as those they are fighting. These people are of a different civilization. I do not mean religious or ethnic differences, but there is a difference of mentality. So, the best way to bring order is to get Iraqis to fight themselves. (S)

The President: That's right. I've made a note to myself about this. (S)

President Putin: What is the best way to ensure this? It took a long time for us in the Caucasus. If the U.N. resolution passes, it will show we are on the right path. But what is your objective in Iraq? (S)

The President: Our objective is to have an orderly process. This will start with a constitution, involving all the ethnic groups in the country. Then there will be free elections, and we will leave. Of course, if after the elections the government still wants us around to provide security or humanitarian aid, we'll consider it. Our intention is to have a peaceful society there. I understand what you mean when you raised their mentality. The priority is to work at this carefully and seriously, and to deal with the outsiders who are coming there to disrupt things. Some people are coming in, like from Saudi Arabia, to destabilize Iraq. The best way to get rid of these groups is to have the Iraqi people go after al-Qaida, Ansar al-Islam, Hezbollah, and the others. (S)

You and I share goals: reasonable progress toward elections, on the basis of a constitution, and we will move on this. Thanks for your advice. (S)

Second is our strategy with respect to security. We are trying to kill as many of the enemy as we can. But our capability is limited by our capacity to gather human intelligence. We need to infiltrate the cells. It is hard. A lot of arms are moving around. Not small arms, but mortars. The terrorists are using them, like at a market recently. This is all aimed at driving us out. The casualties are having an effect on the U.N. The U.N. is pulling out. Why? Because they're afraid. They're afraid, but we're not. It's tough. No one likes signing a letter to a mother whose son has died. But a peaceful Iraq will change a part of the world that needs to change. It would change Saudi Arabia; peace in the Middle East would be more possible. This would be the beginning of a strategic change in the Middle East. Your point about a power vacuum is key. We had our differences about how that vacuum was created. But it is time for people to understand the stakes. Clear statements, like Schroeder's statement on television, would be very important. (S)

The third aspect is rebuilding the country that Saddam ruined. We're making progress with hospitals running, schools functioning, and with oil. The biggest problem is electricity. It's up, but not yet to pre-war levels. There is a lot of sabotage, and our priority is to do a better job. The infrastructure had deteriorated, though. We've been there five months, and there's been a lot of progress. But the world, well, we live in a world where everything is supposed to happen yesterday. A free press has its drawbacks. We're getting our asses kicked everyday, everyday. But we have to remind people we've only been there five months. I'm not changing my mind about a free press. They're writing a constitution, and it took us 12 years to write one. There's progress. We'll get the money out of the Congress. They will extract a couple of pints of blood, but we'll get it. (S)

We'll work on a resolution, too. We want sovereignty, and the best way to get it is for an election, and for that you need a constitution. We won't let people we don't know well spend \$20 billion. These are nice people, but we don't know how it will end up. Thank you for your comments. (S)

President Putin: Let me follow up. First, we won't block the resolution. That is for sure. (S)

Second, we want to be active participants, and actively support you: We will determine what to do depending on how our point of view is taken care of in the resolution. (S)

Third, we want to avoid some wording that is susceptible to dual interpretation. Colin and Igor can work at this. (S)

Secretary of State Powell: Yes. (S)

President Putin: I'm pleased by what you said about the Middle East in general, and how Iraq can be the beginning of a larger process of change in the region. That's a very serious statement. (S)

The President: I meant it. (S)

President Putin: It is right to think of stability in this way. I should say at the outset that we will take a selective approach. We will treat each case separately, and we will make sure that changes do not go against our national interests. But the idea is right, and we will look at joint work to support this. (S)

The President: Each case is different, and each country is different. Some have hope; others do not. No one expects you to go against your national interest. But it is important that you and I keep in mind the larger objective: we should help create conditions for positive change in an area that could become a hotbed of recruits for terrorists and fighters in the war we are fighting. We should recall Japan after World War II. It's a very different country, but the same principles apply here: we rebuilt it; we helped put in place a constitution and free elections; and now, 50 years later, it is not a threat to anyone, but is a friend to Russia and the United States. People think in the short-term about what can be done in a year, but you and I need to think 20-30 years ahead. China will be a challenge, but the part of the world that we're discussing will also be a challenge, and we need to resolve issues there. (S)

Let's take Iran. You have interests there, so do we. We have short-term objectives: we want them to hand over al-Qaida operatives that they are holding to their countries of origin. They have 60 of them, of which 10 or 11 are top killers. We have had signals that they want to work out means to settle this. You should help us by passing the word to them that this is important. (S)

President Putin: Yes. We have spoken to them. ~~(S)~~

The President: Thank you. It's also in your interest to get them out of Iran. There's no telling where they could strike: against you in Moscow or Chechnya, or against us in New York. Second, we want Iran to help with the Shia in southern Iraq so they don't stir up trouble; Russian pressure would be helpful. Third, it is important to settle the issue of their development of nuclear weapons. Your statements have been strong. This is an area where the international community needs to work together. The best thing to do is to come together with a common message. I talked to Chirac about this, and he was very tough about Iran's nuclear ambitions. We can work out a cooperative way to do this. I recall how you pointed out that Iran had received some equipment from U.S. and Dutch firms. No one is pointing fingers, but I believe we're making progress on this. My worry is that if it looks like they're developing a nuclear weapon, our friend Sharon will blast it. Then what the hell would we do? ~~(S)~~

President Putin: They'd build another. ~~(S)~~

The President: They'll blast back. And no one knows what events it would trigger. We need the IAEA to make sure there is transparency and accountability. You have influence with Iran. We must work together. They may have legitimate reasons to have a nuclear power plant, but I don't know why when they have more oil and gas than they know what to do with. The key is that they do not have weapons. The best solution is a diplomatic one. ~~(S)~~

President Putin: We need to agree on principles of cooperation. From time to time you place sanctions on our firms, but not others. The United Kingdom, German, and Dutch firms transfer equipment, but there are no sanctions. There should be an equal approach. ~~(S)~~

The President: That's fine with me. This policy should be applied equally. I've checked, and no U.S. firms are involved. ~~(S)~~

President Putin: Otherwise, our businesses will make trouble and make things difficult on other issues. ~~(S)~~

The President: We don't do things that way. The French do this. I agree with you on this. ~~(S)~~

President Putin: We could discuss this in the G-8. This is a G-8 issue. ~~(S)~~

The President: First of all, at the first G-8 we had, there was not a lot of concern expressed about Iran, and some thought we were exaggerating their weapons program. At the next G-8, there was more universal agreement, because there was more evidence that Iran was taking advantage of availability of purchased and stolen equipment. The Dutch equipment, we believe, was stolen, by the way. Each case is different, and Iran is different than Iraq. We can achieve important outcomes together without damaging anyone's interests by working together. We can work together. There is a real danger of Iran with nuclear weapons.

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President Putin: It's in their constitution. ~~(S)~~

The President: The other thing is that if they have nuclear weapons, and you or a future Russian President expressed friendship for Israel, they could aim their weapons at you, or at us. That's international blackmail. We have a common interest here. But frankly, it's harder for us to influence Iran. We have no commercial relations with them, so we need to work together. ~~(S)~~

President Putin: We understand and share your concerns. The only thing is to work out common principles, but on WMD we have common concerns. On WMD, we have one question: what about Iraq? I don't intend to raise this issue publicly or suggest that the war was mistaken; I'd prefer to remain silent on that. I challenged Blair on this, but frankly I'm sorry I did. The real concern is if there were WMD in Iraq, where are they now? This was a serious responsibility for the U.S. military. The United States has taken responsibility for finding them, and they are a potential source of real danger to you and to us. In whose hands are they now? If they're in nobody's hands, thank God. ~~(S)~~

The President: If there were none, Saddam Hussein would have let the inspectors in. This guy David Kay, the former inspector, is developing a report and this will come out soon. We'll put out the report next week. I don't know what's in it. If I did, I'd be accused of having written it. We're learning more about this and we should talk after Thursday, when it

becomes public. Interviews with Iraqi officials we have in custody are hard, because we don't practice torture. But there are some indications that they were ordered to destroy weapons. But there is a question of whether this happened, and what happened to them? I believe the intelligence on which the U.N. Security Council voted was valid. (S)

President Putin: We are interested in this and will use all means available to us, and will share all the information we have with you. (S)

The President: I want to thank you for your support on North Korea. You were helpful on this. (S)

President Putin: They were offended by our position. (S)

The President: Who gives a damn? (S)

President Putin: They've been offended and could stop cooperating. My approach is different. I gave Kim three Orlov horses for his birthday. He loves horses. We don't know what he has. This may be blackmail as you suggested. But it can't be excluded that he has something. I'd like to hear your position. North Korea says it wants security guarantees and that the United State has been evasive. Why not give them? (S)

The President: We did, orally. In South Korea, I said that we had no intention of invading the North. You never take the military option off the table, you know that. It would be the best diplomatic course if we are able together to make the same strong point about nuclear weapons. Our first strategy was to energize the Chinese to take this seriously. There are the most interested in preventing North Korea from developing them, because they are right on the border. (S)

President Putin: So are we. (S)

The President: I beg your pardon. Look, Kim Jong Il is broke and his population is shrinking. Their military has lowered the height requirement for military recruits and the weight requirement as well. We want to help the people; we feel sorry for them. But we won't until they have agreed to get rid of nuclear weapons. If they want a joint statement from us that there will be no invasion, we could consider it. But this is not on a treaty level, and the Senate would never ratify something like this anyway. He's trying to wriggle out of the net. They want to weaken the front. He's like a baby who

throws his food on the floor. All the adults run up to him and try to calm him down and put the food back. We pick up the food and he throws it down again. (S)

President Putin: Just don't let him go horseback riding. (S)

The President: We want to make progress, but we can't convince him if he thinks that Russia and China don't care. The best way to handle this is for all of us to say the same thing. If we do, he will change his mind. We should just let the food stay on the floor. If he has weapons, we need to stop their transfer. That's why we have worked on our proliferation security initiative. He's running drugs as well, including to your country. Why do we care if he's mad? What can he do? He can't affect your economy. He's a bad dude, as they say in California. (S)

President Putin: Our logic is understandable. Thanks for the bigger picture of your thinking. We must all check our position with each other, from time-to-time. Soon, whether he or others are in charge, the country will start changing. We must create the conditions for change there. We shouldn't make him feel isolated. (S)

The President: We should remember the first step. Our common goal is to get rid of his weapons. It's okay to say, "let's open up," but we have to simultaneously get rid of his weapons. He would just take advantage of anything we offered, and not get rid of his weapons. Remember that he made a deal with my predecessor and lied. You can't trust him. When he does get rid of the weapons, that's something else. We want to help the people. We do care about the suffering of the people. It breaks my heart. Children are eating tree bark. But we can't let our emotions get ahead of the reality of these dangerous weapons. (S)

President Putin: I understand. Thanks. (S)

The President: We've got five minutes before we have to prepare for the press conference. There is one issue to raise: intellectual property rights. This isn't just a Russian problem. (S)

President Putin: They tell me that this is on the checklist. (S)

The President: Good. (S)

President Putin: We have passed a law. We will work on this.

(S)

The President: You know, there is one other thing, not on the checklist: that's the sex trade. It's a problem in Kosovo, the Far East and other places. It's a bad deal. Young girls are sent out and exploited. There are sex tour operators in the United States, and we are planning to arrest them and put them in jail. (S)

President Putin: I agree, we are also working on this. If we can do as well as we do on counter narcotics, we will get results. (S)

The President: It is hard for us to complain a lot about narcotics when so much of the trade is driven by demand in my own country. (S)

President Putin: I want to raise another point, about Guantanamo. You are planning to return our citizens detained there. (S)

National Security Advisor Rice: Seven of the eight. (S)

President Putin: I don't know what we will do. (S)

National Security Advisor Rice: Attorney General Ashcroft sent a letter to Ustinov about returning seven of the eight. (S)

President Putin: I have no doubt that they are guerrillas who belong in jail. (S)

The President: I don't worry. They're coming your way. (S)

President Putin: But we can't put them in jail. We have no proof. We interrogated them in Guantanamo, and they claimed that they were just praying to Allah when the Americans grabbed them. To bring them to court we must have evidence. We have put this in the checklist and will discuss it. But we must take them back only after we have evidence and can bring them to trial and keep them in jail. (S)

The President: We'd rather have you feed them than us. (S)

Secretary of State Powell: We sent you a letter and got a response. (S)

President Putin: I spoke to the prosecutor, and we don't have evidence. ~~(S)~~

The President: You don't want them back? ~~(S)~~

President Putin: We must get our people together to develop the evidence first. Without evidence, once they are on Russian soil, we can detain them only for 48 hours.

National Security Advisor Rice: That's news to us. ~~(S)~~

The President: Okay, let's prepare for the press conference.
(U)

-- End of Conversation --